

without bitterness." This indeed is quite possible, indeed I would say natural to the dispositions of most children.

Of the many advantages of the P.R.S. other than those of books and programmes I have no time to speak. The children like to feel when working in twos or threes at home that other children are doing the same work and are interested at the same time in the same books as they. The Nature work and handicrafts are a great interest to children, and their successes in the latter are a delight to them, while their failures teach them to respect hand-work and hand-workers. The examinations at the end of each term are a great help to the teacher; but it must be remembered that the system of marking is not that adopted by most public examining bodies. Full marks for a paper means that the work is satisfactory considering the age and progress of the child, *not* that the paper is better than any other sent in, and *not* that it is perfect in itself.

## MARY, MARY, SO CONTRARY.

### CHARACTERS.

SIR ANTONY ROWLEY, *a Frog*.

TOMMY GREEN.

A BRIGAND.

MISTRESS MARY.

NURSE.

SCENE—*A Garden. Six children in long green dresses, with large yellow sunflower petals all round their faces, in a row across back of stage.*

1st *S. Flower*. How tired I am of being watered. I am wet to the pith three times a day because our sweet Mistress says I am not tall enough.

2nd *S. Flower*. Your fate is not so unkind as mine. How

would you like to be tied up here without being able to move or wave in the sweet summer breeze, and all because "I stoop!"

3rd *S. Flower*. Ah! mine is the hardest fate; it is the end of everything. I am to be cut down. Yes, you may well start. Cut down, right off my stalk; and then I shall die like a limp straw.

Mistress Mary pronounced my death sentence this morning as she pointed me out to Tommy Green. "That one is going to seed," she said, "you can cut it down." Ah, what hurts me most is to think I look as if I were going to seed.

1st *S. Flower*. Tommy Green is a cruel boy, *he* would not mind the job; he once drowned a harmless helpless cat in a well.

Mistress Mary, true to her character, took him on here as gardener because she *loves* cats.

3rd *S. Flower*. I shall have no Tommy Stout to save me, as the cat had.

2nd *S. Flower*. Alas! Alas! would that we had never been planted.

*Enter TOMMY GREEN singing.*

Froggy would a-wooing go  
Whether conscience let him or no,  
But Froggie's end was full of woe  
Because his *Mummie* got to know!

*S. Flowers (altogether)*. Who was his Mother?

*Tommy*. Eh! What! Oh those talkative sunflowers again. That reminds me I've got to cut down that lanky one.

3rd *S. Flower*. Oh, stop just one minute; *do* tell us first about Froggy, there's a dear.

*Tommy*. Oh, that's an excuse to live and look like a poplar tree a little longer. Who ever saw a respectable sunflower such a size?

1st *S. Flower (coaxingly)*. Oh, but really we do want to know about Froggy; what's his *real* name?

*Tommy*. Why, Sir Antony Rowley, of course; and he comes here courting Mistress Mary! Fancy that, Mistress Mary! Ha, ha, ha!

2nd *S. Flower*. You are a very rude boy; why shouldn't he come courting her? She is our Mistress in spite of all her little ways, and I'll not have her laughed at.



*S. Flowers (altogether).* Hear! hear!  
*Tommy.* Cheeky, are you? Well, Lanky, your turn's come, anyhow.

*Enter Mistress MARY.*

*M. Mary.* Tommy! What are you going to do to that plant?

*Tommy (touching his cap sulkily).* Why, cut it down, of course.

*M. Mary.* How dare you, you wicked naughty little boy?

*Tommy.* Well, you told me to only this morning.

*M. Mary.* How dare you argue! This morning is quite different to this afternoon; go away! *[Exit TOMMY.]*

*3rd S. Flower.* Oh! oh! oh! What an escape!

*M. Mary.* How tiresome of the sun to shine this afternoon. I wanted it to rain particularly.

*1st S. Flower.* It's more than I did.

*M. Mary.* Oh, here he comes. I see him down the lane. I like to see him coming in the distance, it gives one time to fluff out one's curls, so, and twist one's frock, so.

*2nd S. Flower.* And your face, so.

*Enter Sir ANTONY ROWLEY, a Frog.*

*Sir A. R.* Sweet Mistress Mary, I am doubly fortunate to find you at home this afternoon, and to find that sweet smile of welcome on your face. May I take the liberty of presenting you with this humble offering of my regard?

*[Offers bunch of bulrushes.]*

*M. Mary.* Oh, bulrushes, horrid ugly things; I hate the look of them.

*Sir A. R.* Then, Madam, they shall not offend those beautiful eyes another moment. I will throw them away.

*[Throws them.]*

*M. Mary (crying).* Oh, how could you, you cruel unkind nasty creature; you have thrown my bulrushes away.

*Sir A. R.* Sweet Mistress Mary! a thousand thousand pardons; but did you not say the bulrushes were—ahem—at least that you hated them, I mean—er—the look of them.

*M. Mary.* Well! silly, and did I tell you to throw them away?

*Sir A. R.* N—No—o (crestfallen).

*M. Mary (tossing).* Well!

*Sir A. R. (aside).* One of her moods, I must be careful.

*(Aloud.)* Dear Mistress Mary—er, dear Mary—won't you show me round your beautiful garden? I so want to see the roses we planted together two happy years ago.

*M. Mary.* Can't show you round; besides, it wasn't, it was one year ago.

*Sir A. R. (crossly, aside).* Hang it, a Frog's patience has its limits. *(Aloud, very stiffly.)* Well, Madam, will you be good enough to show me the rose trees you and I planted one year ago?

*M. Mary (sweetly).* Why, yes! you dear, cross, naughty old Frog, I should love to show you the roses we planted a year and a half ago. Come along.

*Sir A. R. (stiffly).* Oh, I am cross, am I?

*M. Mary (smiling).* Yes, you were; weren't you?

*Sir A. R. (bowing).* Oh, most charming, most contrary Lady Mary. Woman is truly a mystery—but, a contrary woman. Oh ye gods and little Frogs.

*[They walk off together.]*

*Enter Good FAIRY and Mistress MARY's old Nurse, whose is crying.*

*G. Fairy.* I cannot bear to see you cry, good Nurse; has your charge been teasing you more than usual?

*Nurse.* Oh, I am so sickened with the poor child's whims (and she was meant to be so good and sweet). Only this morning she wanted me to unpick and take to pieces a lovely dimity gown, oh, such a pretty gown, all covered with rose-buds, and you know roses are her favourite flower; she and Sir An—but there, I am wandering from the point. Well, I expostulated, but there, you might as well have argued with that watering can; and then when I had got it all unpicked, in she came again, and saw the pieces lying about, and cried and called me a thoughtless old Hag, and said I ought to have known better than to have done it (oh, and she was meant to be so good and sweet). Of course I had to sew it all up again to please her.

*G. Fairy.* Oh come, Nurse, that is only the matter of a morning's work wasted.

*Nurse.* Oh, but there is a bigger worry about my dear Mistress Mary—for with all her tiresome ways she's dear to me—it's poor Sir Antony Rowley, a kind, good honest Frog, and his patience won't last much longer; I've seen several evidences of that. And all the time the poor lamb loves him



deep down in her wayward heart. If the day comes when he rides away, what will she do then?

*G. Fairy.* Why! the best thing that could happen would be for him to ride away!

*Nurse.* Ah, but he would be too proud to come back, I know him; and she would be too proud to let him know how her heart was breaking.

*G. Fairy.* You forget, good Nurse, that I am a Fairy, and that Cupid is *my* little slave who does *my* bidding. I say again that the best thing that could happen would be for Sir Antony Rowley to ride away in anger, for sorrow sometimes softens the heart, where prosperity leaves it callous and cold. Goodbye, Nurse, I know matters will improve. *[Exit FAIRY.]*

*Enter TOMMY GREEN.*

*Tommy.* Hallo, Nurse, do you hear the row going on?

*Nurse.* No! Where?

*Tommy.* Oh, the usual thing, though I don't know what it was about; but Sir Froggy has marched off with a face like thunder.

*Nurse.* Oh!

*Tommy.* Funny, isn't it? I guess he has got a good wigging this time.

*Nurse.* Little boys should not guess things they know nothing about.

*Tommy.* It seems to me there's an awful lot of pepper and vinegar about this morning; but here comes her graciousness—I'm off. *[Exit TOMMY.]*

*Enter MARY.*

*M. Mary.* Oh Nurse, such a funny thing has happened!

*Nurse.* A *funny* thing! You don't look as if it had amused you much, anyway.

*M. Mary.* That silly Sir Antony asked me to marry him.

*Nurse (eagerly).* Yes, yes, and you said——

*M. Mary.* Why, *no*, of course, and—and—I don't care a bit; oh, not a bit (sobs), it's so funny, Nurse.

*Nurse.* Well! Well! Well!

*S. Flowers (altogether).* Well! Well! Well!

CURTAIN.

## SCENE II.

*Mistress MARY sitting disconsolate on a garden bench, sings:—*

They say there's a secret charm that lies  
In some wild flow'et's bell,  
That grows in a vale where the west wind sighs,  
And where secrets best might dwell.

And they who can find the fairy flower,  
A treasure possess that might grace a throne,  
For oh! they can rule with the softest pow'r,  
The heart they would call their own.

I've sought it by day from morn till eve,  
I've won it in dreams at night,  
And then how I grieve my couch to leave,  
And sigh at the morning's light.

Yet, sometimes I think in a hopeful hour,  
The blissful moment I yet may see,  
To win the fair flow'r from the fairy's bow'r,  
And give it, love, to thee.

*[Stops singing, and jumps up.]*

Oh, I must find the magic flower, if I hunt the whole world for it, I must get it—and—then give it to—hush! Ah! I thought that was the gate clicking as it used to do when he swung through. Yes, I must get it and give it to him, and *then* he will love me as he used to do before I so cruelly sent him away for no reason at all.

Ah, where *does* it grow? Where shall I look next?

*Enter NURSE.*

*Nurse.* Dear Mistress Mary, I think I have news for you. I believe I have discovered where the little flower grows!

*M. Mary.* Where? where?

*Nurse.* Well, I went to have a chat with old Mother Flipper-Flopper, and there now, would you believe it, she is making a new set of jackets, all red Welsh flannel, for those blessed skinny geese, she says by the time the winter comes those they have—



*M. Mary.* Oh, yes, yes, what do I care for her silly geese? Go on, what about the flower? You went to see Mother Flipper-Flopper and she—?

*Nurse.* Well, that is just what I am telling you, only you will interrupt. Well, Mother Flipper-Flopper knows most of the folk tales of these parts—it was her mother that was stopped by Will-o'-the-Wisp one mid-summer's night when the moon—

*M. Mary.* Yes, yes, and she knows all about the flower?

*Nurse.* Well, this is what she said: if a maid or man—

*M. Mary.* But he is a *frog*.

*Nurse.* My faith! how you interrupt; are you and Sir Antony the only maid and man in the world?

*M. Mary* (*mutter*s) *Frog*.

*Nurse.* Well, if a man and maid, or a frog and maid or anything you like, stand ankle deep in the Iris Marsh as the first full moon after midsummer day rises, and when the moon sails just above the highest poplar on the moor, they just shut their eyes and take three steps forward, and then bend, stretching out their right hand, they will feel the floweret.

*M. Mary.* Nurse! it is full moon to-night, the first since midsummer day.

*Nurse.* Then, dear, you must go to-night. I will bring you to the border of the marsh, then leave you.

*M. Mary* (*doubtfully*). I don't think I want to.

*Nurse.* Now, isn't that just like you: if I had said you ought *not* to go, wild horses would not have kept you back. Well, have your own way, I've done my best. [*Exit*.

*M. Mary.* I don't want to go much, because it's *his* marsh. Supposing he were anywhere about and guessed my quest! How should I dare hold up my head again? But there, I'll risk it, for *all* depends on it, if Old Mother Flipper-Flopper speaks the truth.

Hey ho! I feel happier now, I will go and water my poor roses; they have been left to droop of late.

[*Exit Mistress MARY.*

*Enter Sir ANTONY ROWLEY opposite side.*

*Sir A. R.* (*sings*)—

I've sought it by day from morn till eve,  
I've won it in dreams at night,  
I've won the fair flower from the fairy's bower,  
And given it, love, to thee.

Yes, but only found it in a dream! A flower! Would a flower win *her* love? I'm a bad hand at picking flowers, yet I'd pick every flower on the moor to win a smile again from Mistress Mary.

*Enter TOMMY GREEN.*

*Tommy Green.* Good day, sir.

*Sir A. R.* Good day, Tommy, how is your mistress?

*Tommy.* I don't know anything about her.

*Sir A. R.* Here, you little scoundrel! (*Gives him a coin.*) Now do you know how your mistress is?

*Tommy.* She has got a grand new start.

*Sir A. R.* What do you mean?

*Tommy.* Why, she's after a flower that's got some power in it of a queer sort; perhaps it gives one a good temper.

*Sir A. R.* What! she is looking for a flower!

*Tommy.* Yes. (*Going.*)

*Sir A. R.* Stop, stop! You know more about this, you have been listening.

*Tommy* (*beginning to cry*). I have not, and if you tell of me—

*Sir A. R.* Now, be quiet and take that (*gives another coin*). I am not going to tell of you, so just try and remember what you know about your mistress wanting this flower.

*Tommy* (*sulkily*). Well, she's going to the Iris Marsh to-night to look for it. I thought of taking a few friends of my own there to see the fun. Would you like to come, sir?

*Sir A. R.* (*raising his riding whip*). Stop your impertinence! Now, look here. If you go near the marsh to-night I'll thrash you with this till you'll wish you had never been born. You are too fond of prying into your mistress's affairs.

*Tommy.* I'm not prying. I've got as much right to go and have some fun at the marsh as you have.

*Sir A. R.* I never remember to have said I was going there, for fun or any other reason.



Tommy. Oh, I see, you just want to know by way of not seeming too prying into Mistress Mary's affairs.

Sir A. R. (*rushing at him*). Begone from here, you little brute. *[Exit TOMMY hurriedly.]*

Ah, now I may hope once more, how joyful the whole world looks again. *[He walks behind bush.]*

*Enter TOMMY GREEN and a Brigand who do not see him.*

Brigand. Young Sir Rowley! He wants *my* prize? He is the prize *I* want, so I shall get them both. Why, lad, he is as rich as Cræsus; I've long had my eye on him. Had I known he loved Mistress Mary he should not have been left in peace so long, but you say they have quarrelled?

Tommy Green. Yes, but that only makes them love each other all the more behind each other's back.

Brigand. Hum, you seem to have good experience for a young 'un.

Tommy. Ah, you see I've watched Mistress Mary, and *she's* a good example of what I say.

Sir A. R. (*from behind bush*). Oh, Tommy, are you speaking truth? What joy!

Brigand. Oh, she is, is she? Well, she shall transfer her affections by having a quarrel with me, and we'll see how that works.

Tommy. How are you going to quarrel with her?

Brigand. Why, by stealing her lover and popping him off, and then, having in the meantime stolen her, she will have just a little bone to pick with me, and as you say quarrelling makes love stronger, there you are!

Well, I think I've got all your directions safe. Iris Marsh to-night, just after moonrise; so now I'll be off to make preparations. You're a smart lad, Tommy, and as I've promised, you shall join our band when you've grown a bit. If anything fresh turns up during the day just let me know.

*[Exit Brigand.]*  
Tommy. Ha, now I must play a careful game. The question is, who would pay highest, Sir Antony or my friend the Brigand? I might go now and tell Sir Antony, but he is such a peppery lot; and then there's the chance of becoming one of that glorious brigand band further on. Yes, I think I'll leave Froggie alone.

Sir ANTONY ROWLEY comes from behind bush and takes TOMMY by collar.

Sir A. R. Will you! Well, he does not think he will leave you just yet. I heard every word that passed between you and your worthy friend. You will neither become a brigand nor gain one halfpenny more from either party concerned in to-night's doings. I am going to lock you up tight till it's well over, and then dispose of you as I think best; so come along, Master Tommy Green, you have the same heart now as you had when you drowned the helpless cat in the well. *[Exeunt TOMMY and Sir ANTONY ROWLEY.]*

CURTAIN.

### SCENE III.

*Stage dark; gradual lime-light. Mistress MARY in the centre of the stage.*

M. Mary (*softly*). The moon is rising, rising. Ah, here it comes, dear, kind, white moon! You will help me to find the little flower, help me to win back the love I spurned and threw away. No one could be cruel on a beautiful night like this; all the air breathes love, the scent of the marsh land, and the twitter of the night birds all, all breathe love and peace. Ah, now it has risen high. I will try my fate. *(Shuts her eyes and stretches out her arms.)*

*Enter Sir ANTONY ROWLEY softly, facing her. She takes three steps forward and falls into his arms.*

The flower, where is the flower? Oh, Sir Antony, you—

Sir A. R. Mary! Mary! You don't want the flower now, do you?

M. Mary. No, no, no!

*Enter Good FAIRY hurriedly.*

G. Fairy. Away, away, both of you, here come the Brigands with their wicked chief. Mary, child, give me your cloak, quick.



*Sir A. R.* No, I will not leave you with the Brigands. What Frog would desert a Fairy?

*G. Fairy (stamping).* Go quickly, I command you. I am a Fairy and can take care of myself. You are kind and brave, Sir Antony, but go. [*Exit Sir ANTONY ROWLEY and MARY.*]

*FAIRY stands in centre wrapped in MARY'S cloak, in exactly the same attitude just taken by MARY. Brigand steals in.*

*G. Fairy.* Now for the spell. I will shut my eyes and take three steps forward.

*Brigand creeps nearer. FAIRY stoops with outstretched arms.*

*Brigand seizes her wrists. FAIRY throws off her cloak and he falls back. She waves her wand; he crouches to the ground.*

Ah, wicked Brigand, now I have met you face to face, and thwarted you in your cruel plans. You thought you were capturing Mistress Mary, but the enemy of all your band was standing here. Now go, from henceforward you shall be a common earth worm. Go!

[*Exit Brigand hurriedly.*]

*Re-enter Sir ANTONY ROWLEY and MARY. Good FAIRY takes a hand of each.*

And now, my children, your quarrel is made up. Mary, let this be a life-long lesson to you to have a steady purpose of will, to know your own heart and mind, and not change.

Sir Antony, from henceforward you will find this heart you so love, kinder, gentler, and more considerate. Bless you both, and may you live happily ever afterwards.

*Waves wand over them.*

CURTAIN.

W. A.

## CONDORCET'S ADVICE TO HIS DAUGHTER (1794).

[CONTRIBUTED BY MRS. WINKWORTH.]

My child, if my care and my caresses have sometimes consoled you in your childhood, if you have treasured their memory, may you receive this advice, dictated by my affection, with loving confidence, and may it contribute to your happiness.

I. Whatever may be the situation in which you are placed when you read these lines, which I write far from you, indifferent to my own fate but concerned for your's and your mother's, bear in mind that nothing can guarantee its continuance.

Make it your habit to work, not only that you may be independent of the services of others, but that work may provide for your wants, so that, though you may be reduced to poverty, you will never be a dependent.

Even if you should never need this resource, work will at least serve to keep you from fear, to sustain your courage, and to help you to face with firmer eye any reverses of fortune that may threaten you. You will feel that you are absolutely independent of wealth, and you will value it less; you will be more sheltered from the woes one risks either in acquiring riches, or through fear of losing them.

Choose some kind of work in which, not the hand only is employed, but the mind is also busied without too much fatigue: work which compensates for what it costs by the pleasure it affords, for without that pleasure, the disgust you would feel if work were ever needed for your support, would make it almost as unbearable as dependence. If it only freed you from that, to deliver you over to ennui, perhaps you would not have courage to adopt a resource which only offered you unhappiness as the price of independence.